MY MOST THRILLING MOMENT on the TRACK

MEN Who Risk Life to Win the Big Automobile Race at Indianapolis Tell of Incidents Fraught With Greatest Peril. One Man Drove His Car Blindly Against Concrete Wall to Save Another's Life.

ROUND a bowl shaped brick track two and a half miles in circumference more than a score of speed mad men drove their powerful racing automobiles for five hundred miles last Memorial Day at Indianapolis. For the road racer the landscape is ever changing, but for the men who drove their cars at Indianapolis the monotonous glare of red brick, the never changing blur of gray concrete which lines the track, is perhaps a greater danger than irregular curves or ruts in a road.

The sight and the monotonous roar of the engines have a hypnotic effect on the men, lulling them sometimes into unconsciousness at the wheel, sometimes crazing them so that they take chances the very thought of which would turn them pale in ordinary circumstances.

An inducement to the very best of driving, the resort to every little bit of skill of which a man is capable, there was a purse of $50,000 to be divided. The winner took $20,000, and the remaining amount was divided in various sums down to $1,000 to the man who finished twelfth. The risks which were taken for this money on Memorial Day thrilled the spectators as no chariot race ever thrilled ancient Rome. Risks are only commonplaces to the race drivers, and some of them have been induced to tell of the rides they have taken where Death sat closest beside them.

"Hughie" Hughes, a nervy little Englishman, tells a story of an accident which is apt to happen to any who drive racing cars.

BY HUGHIE HUGHES.


HUGHIE HUGHES

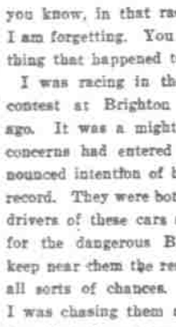
TELL you I've been in so many races that it's a hard thing, you know, to pick out one of them and say that it put you in the very devil of a fix. I think, though, the track races are apt to cause more accidents than road racing. That's why there'll be some jolly fine smashups out at Indianapolis. Now, you know, in that race—— Oh, yes, but I am forgetting. You want to hear something that happened to me. Very well.

I was racing in the twenty-four hour contest at Brighton Beach two years ago. It was a mighty hard race. Two concerns had entered cars with the announced intention of breaking the world's record. They were both after it. Now, the drivers of these cars set a frightful pace for the dangerous Brighton track. To keep near them the rest of us had to take all sorts of chances. I remember when I was chasing them around the paddock turn that I was brought closer to death than I ever want to be again.

Eaten away by the terrific strain, my two front tires blew up with a roar. Spinning around, the rear of the car, describing a great arc, crashed into the fence. What my feelings were in those flying seconds I cannot tell. I only know that I thought more of religion than at any time in my life. I remember the grind of the brakes, the screaming contact of splintered wood scraping alongside me. I remember how the car, tilting on its left wheel, rose, swayed, hung for a moment as if about to overturn, taking me and my mechanician to destruction, and then it righted and crashed down on four wheels. I was safe, but when I jumped out I was trembling.

A bursting tire is feared by all race drivers. Ralph De Palma tells what happened to him as the result of a tire explosion.

BY RALPH DE PALMA.


RALPH DE PALMA

OU ask me to tell you something about my most thrilling moment on the track. What you ask is hard. To most of us they are all thrilling moments. In the years I have been driving racing cars—five years, to be exact—I have had, I suppose, as many close calls as any driver. I have shot from a track and gone tipping through a fence. I have scraped my wheels against the car racing beside me. I have skidded from a course and crashed into a great bowlder. And always I have escaped.

There was one time, though, that, now I think of it, was undoubtedly my most sensational experience. It happened at Danbury, on a little half mile dirt track, where they used to run the trotting races at the Connecticut State Fair. Local promoters had arranged a meeting, and Bruce-Brown was to meet me in the feature event of the day. We got off to a f:... start, and, picking up speed quickly, the two cars roared into the first turn. Swinging round the backstretch, I managed to shoot into the lead, nosing my machine ahead of Bruce-Brown's, and was sweeping along at an awful pace when suddenly I heard the sound that all drivers fear.

It was a deafening explosion, the bursting of my front tire. A moment later I felt the car gradually rising from the rear. Faster and faster it rose, until jumping into the air it spun on its front wheels and crashed in a heap. I remained at the wheel, because a driver never leaves the wheel if he thinks there's a chance. But there was no chance. The upset came so quickly that I was caught. I only remembered a great cloud of dust that hung trembling, a streak that swept by in smoke and flame, a sharp pain in my legs, and then——

The next thing I knew a burly special policeman was holding me in his arms. With his right arm he supported my body. With the other he was holding a whiskey glass to my mouth and pouring its contents down my throat. I remember him saying:—"You'll be all right now. This will brace you up. Just walk a bit." Then he withdrew the arm with which he had been holding me and stepped back. The moment he did so I fell in a heap on the track. My two legs had been broken and neither he nor I had realized it.

That accident disabled me for ten weeks. Sometimes I wonder how it was that my skull wasn't broken, too.

Harry Knight tells how he saved a man's life at Indianapolis a year ago.

BY HARRY KNIGHT.


HARRY KNIGHT

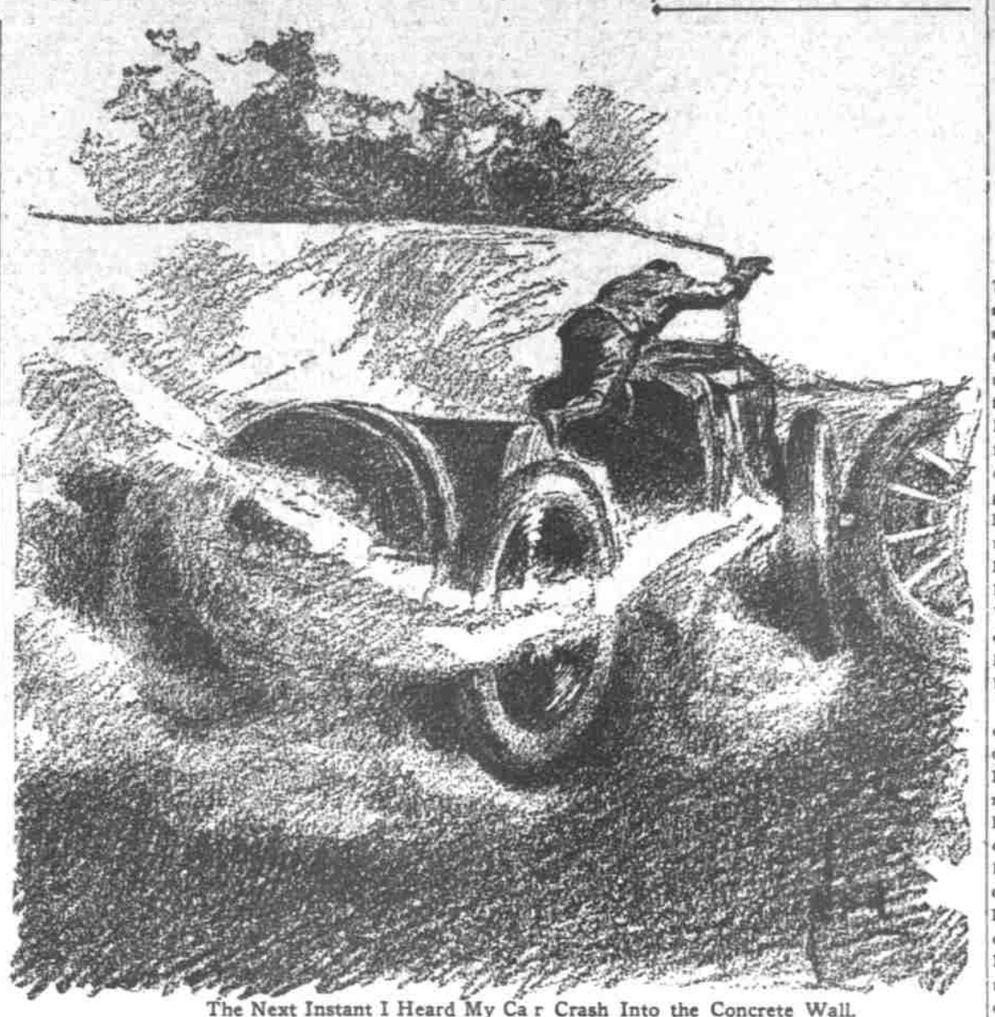
Y racing career has been a comparatively short one. I sat for the first time in a bucket seat only a few years ago. I have not been driving half as long as most of the men whom I will meet on Memorial Day. Yet I have one experience that from the rest of my life stands out like a flash of flame. Also, oddly enough, it happened at Indianapolis during the 500-mile race last Memorial Day. It is a hard incident to tell about. One does not like to say what one has done, especially if any good comes of it. After reading this you will understand what I mean and my reluctance to put the incident in my own words.

It was during the early stages of the race, but the driving was growing fiercer. Harroun in his yellow Wasp was cutting a terrific pace. Like machinery he swept on, mile after mile, never changing, just the smooth running Wasp that cut down distance with maddening regularity. Behind him six cars kept bunched together. But always Harroun was a half mile in front and always the six drove faster and faster, trying to overtake him.

Once when he was whizzing past the grand stand the six of us came bellowing out of the home turn after him. Down the stretch we shot. Somehow I managed to jump the others and, putting on the accelerator, gained a big lead before they realized it. Nearer and nearer to the stand my car was hurling me. Then something happened.

I saw suddenly a disabled machine drawn up before the pits. It was in the middle of the track and I could see the driver, Jagersberger, tugging at the wheel trying to shoot the car to a place of safety. He knew we were coming. Then I saw his mechanician jump out, apparently trying to turn the wheels so Jagersberger could drive the car beside the pits. Then I knew that the steering knuckle was broken. My car was thundering and shaking now, for I was making faster time than ever before.

But as I peered through the drifting smoke I saw the mechanician suddenly struck down by a convulsive lurch of Jagersberger's machine. I saw him begin rolling over and over on the track. I saw him stagger to his feet only to fall. His legs were smashed. Then I saw him begin rolling across the bricks, rolling himself to a place of safety. Now I was almost upon them. On one side blocking the way was the disabled car with Jagersberger huddled beside it. On the other side was the mechanician, a wounded man, rolling across the track.


The Next Instant I Heard My Ca r Crash Into the Concrete Wall.

For a second I was at a loss what to do. To go ahead would mean smashing into Jagersberger and his machine or running over the mechanician. Of course there was a chance that I might be able to steer around the mechanician. I thought better of it, though, and thinking as men do at such times, twisted my steering wheel all the way around, closed my eyes and prayed. The next instant I heard my car crash into the concrete wall along the track side, tear up the gravel, rip into Lytle's machine, a few pits down and then shoot on a crazy bolt into a nearby field. That's all I remember. That night they told me I had saved somebody's life. I think they exaggerated, but it was an experience I shall never forget.

And it is to the road race that we must again turn to hear the experience of Joe Matson. While Joe Matson was winning the Indiana Trophy, a race held two years ago near Chicago, he was almost killed.

BY "JOE" MATSON.


JOE MATSON

BOUT the middle of the Indiana Trophy race there came to me the most thrilling experience of my racing career. I had caught and passed Robertson and was trying to increase my lead. I knew that Robertson was having trouble with his car, but I also knew him to be one of the cleverest and most daring drivers i.. the game. He was a hard finisher. I needed every second that I could gain on him. So along the back stretch where I wouldn't be caught and blamed for taking chances I forced my car to the limit. The roads were rather rutty at this point on the course and often we were bumped up and down on our seats. Still I drove faster. I needed every second I could get.

Then came the accident. As I was looking down the road, figuring on how close I could shave the turn ahead, I heard a splintering sound. The next moment the seat broke beneath me. I was thrown to the floor of the car with both hands hanging to the wheel like a man falling from a window grips the ledge. I couldn't see where I was steering. I might be headed for destruction. Indeed as the kids do in the comic supplements.

The other experience happened last year at Daytona Beach. This time it was a powerful racing automobile that shot me over the ground. It covered a mile in twenty-five seconds, which I believe to be faster than the crib went.

People have asked me to tell something about the experiences of that dash. I have hesitated to do so. A man does not like to say he was afraid. I was afraid. As I drove to the starting line I noticed that the beach was rather rough. That made it bad. The car would jump. I was to have a flying start. They would not begin to take my time until a point was passed further down the beach. So without further ado I jumped in, opened the throttle and was off.

Instantly the wind began to sing. Then it blew a gale, harder and harder, until I felt the muscles of my neck straining. It was awful to face that resistance. It drove my back against the seat. And


I Twisted the Wheel with My Left Hand Just as the Front Wheels Were Plunging Into a Ditch.

until my mechanician grabbed me up and lifted my head to where I could see the road I was in the gravest danger of my life. Thrown to the floor of that car, unable to see the road ahead, it was only Providence that stopped us from jumping the course and crashing into the ditch.

Robert Burman broke a world's record when he drove a racing car at a speed of 141 miles an hour over the sand of Daytona Beach, Fla.

BY ROBERT BURMAN.

ROBERT BURMAN

N my life two experiences stand out. One happened when I was a little boy. I had a dream. I dreamed that I was in bed and that somebody put me and my bed into a cannon. Then the cannon was fired, and I, bed and all went tearing through the air close to the ground, faster than the bullet. And when I awoke I didn't fall on the floor, then the car began to shake to the roaring of its 200 horse power engine. Faster and faster we flew. For thirty feet at a time the car was not on the ground—just leaping through the air and crashing down on the sand as if it were going through the beach. And always the wind kept howling and the front wheels doing a weird dance.

I was just beginning to lose consciousness, to loosen the grip I had on the steering post, to close my eyes, to yield completely to the drowsiness that had come over me, when, with a last instinctive movement, I shut off the engine. How long the car bowled along with the power gone I don't know. When it stopped, though, a man came running up crying, "Bob, you've broken the world's record!" It was some moments before I could talk. The breath had almost been driven from my body. Then I told him, "Well, I never want to again."

Ralph Mulford has an exciting story of a road race in Fairmount Park, Philadelphia, two years ago.

BY RALPH MULFORD.


RALPH MULFORD

Y most sensational moment was neither an accident nor the fear of an accident. It was a delay that cost me the Fairmount Park race and a $2,000 cash prize in October of 1910. My car was entered in the 600 cubic inch engine displacement class, but I was competing for the grand time prize against 750 inch engines, huge racing monsters of much greater power than my stock machine. Nevertheless, I had succeeded in passing them one by one, until on the twenty-first lap, or twenty-five miles from the finish, I was in the lead. My margin, though, was only a few seconds. Then as I came swinging down the stretch I found that I needed gasolene and oil. It almost broke my heart to make a stop at this stage of the race. The loss of a second was costly. I had to have the fuel, though; so I reluctantly brought the car to a stop. When I got going again Len Zengle in one of the big racers had passed me. He had gained less than a minute lead, but enough to win.

It was disheartening after I had cut down the field to lose in this way. So I dashed after Zengle, taking chances that I had not dared before on the tricky Fairmount course. For three rounds I chased him and his smoking racer. Finally I caught him and at the beginning of the last lap was in the lead by nineteen seconds. I counted the race as good as won. It was a tremendous advantage, with only one circuit of the course to be made. Imagine my disappointment, then, when rounding a turn on the back stretch my car blew a tire. We had to stop and put on a new one. We worked, my mechanician and I, faster than we had ever done before. Zengle was ahead. He must be. This delay would give him back the nineteen seconds he had lost. The thought engine just as my mechanic, scrambling to his feet, jumped in beside me. We would catch Zengle and win!

Opening wide the engine I shot round the park. I remember passing a gray blur, Zengle's car that had just got going. I passed the finish line with him behind. I thought I had won. Then the gray racer swept up the stretch, over the line, had its time taken and won. I had lost by bare seconds, lost after a heartbreaking race of two hundred miles.

Teddy Tetzlaff, who broke a world's record at Santa Monica, tells a thrilling story.

BY TEDDY TETZLAFF.

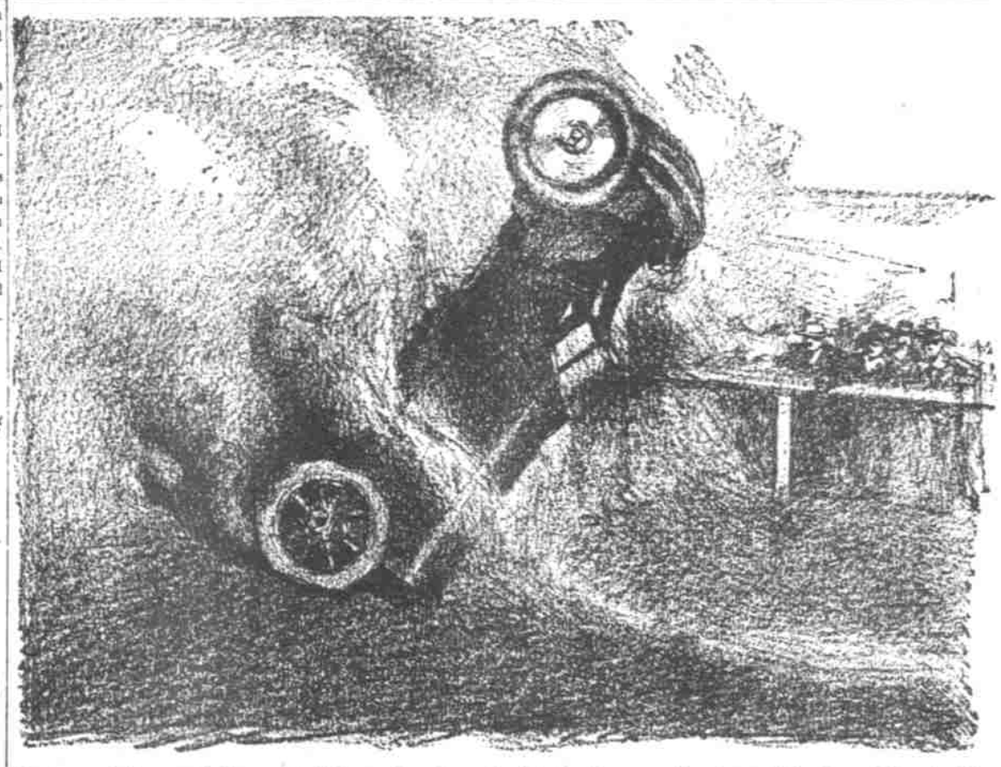

TEDDY TETZLAFF

HY is it that you newspaper men are continually asking for "thrilling experiences," how it feels to travel eighty miles on hour to win a race? Generally I refrain from talking about them. I have not thought anything in my career worth the telling. But now there is something which may interest you. It happened only a few weeks ago when I was racing over the Santa Monica boardwards against some of the best drivers in the world. I won that race. I broke a world's record. I beat Bruce-Brown, Bragg, Dingley. I beat them because I was used to the course and my car stood up well. But I wouldn't have beaten them if an incident had turned out other than it did. It was the closest shave I have ever had.

During the closing laps of the race I was driving my car to the limit. I knew I had the record within my grasp. I wanted to make sure of it. So I shot around the turns, skidding and sloughing through the dirt, half blinded with it, and tearing off again with the throttle wide open. After I had repeated this performance about five times I began to wonder if I couldn't go faster. I took to shaving the corners to save time. The fractions of a second are worth while in a road race.

It was on one of these close turns that the moment came. I had just shot out of the curve when I felt something sting my arm like a bullet. It was a stone thrown up from the road. It cracked my muscles, paralyzing them. It was the right arm and, no longer able to hold the wheel, it dropped weakly at my side. Not knowing what I was doing I threw over the left to grab it. The wheel was without a hand.

Instantly the car shot across the road at a crazy angle, and, realizing what I had done, I twisted the wheel with my left hand just as the front wheels were plunging into a ditch. Somehow we remained righted and, tearing along the ditch, jumped back on the road. By this time the momentary paralysation was over, and with both hands on the wheel I took up the chase. Why that car didn't turn over with us beneath is beyond me.


Faster and Faster It Rose, Until Jumping Into the Air It Spun on Its Front Wheels and Crashed in a Heap.

Sold Wives in England as Late as 1832

IT was long a popular belief among the ignorant in England that if a man sold his wife at public auction such a sale had all the legality of a regular divorce. The latest case of the kind on record occurred in 1832.

John Thompson, a farmer, had been married for three years and he and his wife agreed to separate. Thompson brought his wife into the town of Carlisle and by the bellman announced he was about to sell her.

At twelve o'clock Thompson placed his wife on a large oak chair with a rope or halter of straw about her neck. He then made this announcement:—"Gentlemen:—I have to offer to your notice my wife, Mary Anne Thompson, otherwise Williams, whom I mean to sell to the highest and fairest bidder. It is her wish as well as mine to part forever. She has been to me only a born serpent. I took her for my comfort, the good of my home; but she became my tormentor, a domestic curse, a night invasion and a daily devil. I speak truth from my heart when I say—may God deliver us from troublesome wives and frolicsome women! Avoid them as you would a mad dog, a roaring lion, a loaded pistol, cholera morbus, Mount Etna or any other pestilential thing in nature. Now I have shown you the dark side of my wife, and told you of her faults and failings. I will introduce the bright and sunny side of her, and explain her qualifications and goodness. She can read novels and milk cows, she can laugh and weep with the same ease that you could take a glass of ale when thirsty. Indeed, gentlemen, she reminds me of what the poet says of women in general:—

Heaven gave to women the peculiar grace,
To laugh, to weep, to cheat the human race.

"She can make butter and scold the maid, she can sing Moore's melodies and plait her folds and caps; she cannot make rum, gin or whiskey, but she is a good judge of the quality of each from long experience in tasting them. I therefore offer her, with all her perfections and imperfections, for the sum of fifty shillings."

The woman was finally sold to one Henry Mears for the sum of twenty shillings and a Newfoundland dog. Man and wife parted in perfect good temper, Mears and the woman going one way, Thompson and the dog another.